

WASHINGTON, DC— Later today the House of Representatives is expected to pass a measure, long supported by Congresswoman Gwen Moore, which will temporarily extend unemployment benefits for workers whose current unemployment compensation has run out.

“As the recession gets worse, we need to help workers who have been laid off and still can’t find work,” said Rep. Moore. “With the unemployment rate rising each month we can no longer allow the Bush Administration and its allies in Congress hinder efforts to help hardworking Americans get back on their feet.”

Since the beginning of the year, Congresswoman Moore has been pushing for efforts to help unemployed workers make ends meet in the face of rapidly rising gas and food costs, while they continue to struggle to find work in the slowing economy. However, even as the economy has weakened, Rep. Moore and her colleagues in Congress continue to face resistance from the Bush Administration and his GOP allies opposed to alleviating the burden many Americans face.

If passed, the measure would immediately provide unemployment benefits for up to 13 weeks or half the duration of regular unemployment compensation. In states with high unemployment — which the bill defines as at least 6% total unemployment or 4% insured unemployment — the measure provides for an additional 13 weeks of extended benefits for a total of 26 additional weeks. In addition, the program's weekly compensation would be equal to the amount received under regular unemployment compensation. To qualify for extended compensation, a recipient's benefit year for regular compensation must have ended after May 1, 2007.

The Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act (H.R. 5749) would benefit over 3.8 million Americans. Furthermore, individuals who receive benefits through the program before the termination date at the end of March 2009 would still be eligible for compensation for the full 13-week period. Under current law, most states' regular unemployment compensation programs provide up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits.

“I remain committed to helping unemployed workers as well as discouraged workers- those individuals who are no longer counted on the unemployment rolls because their benefits have expired,” said Moore. “I understand what it means to look for work and worry about how you are going to take care of your family in the meantime. By extending these benefits Congress will be utilizing one of the most cost-effective and fast-acting ways to stimulate the economy while helping millions of American families make it through these difficult economic times.”

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